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Grant

Muckle Spate o' 'Twenty-nine

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The Bon-Accord Booklets

:: The ::

Muckle Spate o' 'Twenty-nine

By DAVID GRANT

The Bon-Accord Press
WILLIAM SMITH & SONS :: ABERDEEN

No. 1 *Price* 6*d. net*

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The Bon-Accord Booklets

No. 1

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

IT is our intention, should sufficient encouragement be given to the venture, to issue from time to time under the general title of *The Bon-Accord Booklets*, choice selections in verse and prose, vernacular and other, from the local literature of the North-East of Scotland. Many items of more than passing interest and worth, relating to the life, customs, and history of our home-folk, lie buried and out of ken (except to the specialist) in magazines, newspapers, broadsheets, scarce volumes, and contemporary manuscripts, which are well worth rescuing for present-day readers. This we mean to do in a series of booklets, varying in price according to size, in style similar to the present one, and admitting of their being gathered together in a volume for further preservation. No liberties will be taken with any text we reprint, editing being strictly limited to biographical notes on authors, where such can be had; and, where required, a glossary of words in the vernacular, now out of or passing out of use, will also be given.

To the family of the late David Grant we are indebted for liberty to give, as the first of the series of *The Bon-Accord Booklets*, his "Muckle Spate o' 'Twenty-nine," which is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces of our northern vernacular lore.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

DAVID GRANT, the author of "The Muckle Spate o' 'Twenty-nine," was born at Affrusk, Banchory, in 1823, and was reared in Strachan, where his father was a farmer. While at school and afterwards, he was a diligent student, and ultimately prepared himself for the University. He entered Marischal College (1850-51), and studied there for two sessions. He then turned to teaching, and was successively schoolmaster at Lhanbryd; Canisbay; Glasgow; the Grammar School, Oundle, Northamptonshire; Ecclesall College and Springvale College, Sheffield He was for some time editor of *The Sheffield Post*, and his pen in many ways was ever busy with prose and verse. His health breaking down in 1883, he removed to Edinburgh, where he died 22nd April, 1886. While on his deathbed a Civil List allowance of £50 was conferred on him in recognition of his literary work. His principal publications are:—

"The Hermit of Powis," Aberdeen, 1861.
"Handbook of the Great North Railway," 1862.
"Metrical Tales," Sheffield, 1880.
"Lays and Legends of the North," Edinburgh, 1884.
"The Chronicles of Keckleton," Edinburgh, 1888.

"The Muckle Spate" was the leading poem in the author's "Lays and Legends of the North." Many of his songs were set to music by skilled musicians. For an appreciation of David Grant's many literary labours, and a detailed account of his life, we refer our readers to "The Bards of Bon-Accord," pp. 581-597

The Muckle Spate o' 'Twenty-nine

Being some memorials o' the Muckle Spate in auchteen twenty-nine, as the same exhibited itsel' i' the Howe o' Feugh to the een an' imagination o' an indwaller i' the parish o' Stra'an

---

Fytte the First*

Shawin' the oncome o' the spate, alang wi' the general ruction ensuin' an' the special mishanters occurrin' to the Dyster o' Dalsack ; at Mill o' Clinter ; to Ennochie's cluckin' hen ; to the Fairmer o' Fytestane ; at the Mill o' Stra'an ; to the Souter o' Dalbreck ; to the Wyever o' the Strathy ; and to the Cairder at Haugh o' Stra'an.

THO' I was only but a bairn
In auchteen twenty-nine,
The mem'ry o' the Muckle Spate
Has never left my min'.

We had a byous weety time,
A week, or maybe mair,
The eident rain kept peltin' on,
Nae single hoor wis fair ;
An' then for four-an'-twenty hoors
There followed a doonfa'
The like o' which, sin' Noah's flood,
The warl' never saw.
The thunner rum'lt roon the hills,
The howes were in a soom,

*Fytte, or fit—section of a poem (*Oxford Dictionary*).

We thocht the warl', owergaen wi' age,
Drew near the crack o' doom;
We thocht the tulzie wis renew't
Wi' yon uncanny ban';
We thocht the deil hed speelt the lift,
An' got the upper han';
We thocht the promise wis forgot
To droon the warl' nae mair;
We thocht—we kent na' fat to think,
Oor hieds wi' thocht were sair.

It wis upon a Fiersday nicht,
As near as I can think,
When this ooncommon ootpoor fell
Fae skies as black as ink;
An' when we raise at skriek o' day,
In ilka bit ravine,
A reamin' burn cam' rum'lin' doon
Faur burn wis nane thestreen.
The Feugh cam' rairin' doon fae Birse,
An' swept the haughs o' Stra'an;
Horse, pigs, an' kye were droont i' Dye,
An' sheep by scores in A'an.
An' yarn reels, an' spinnin' wheels,
An' bowies, cogs, and caups,
An' tables, chairs, an' cutty steels,
On ane anither's taps;
An' girnels, aumries, washin' tubs,
An' smuggled whisky kegs;

Cheese chessils, butter kits, an' kirns,
An' couple bauks an' legs;
An' divots, thack, an' timmer lums,
An' rantle trees wi' cruiks,
An' backets, baith for aise an' saut,
An' racks for plates an' buiks;
An' barn-fans, an' flails, an' fleers,
An' canasses an' secks;
An' cheeks o' doors, an' doors themsel's,
Wi' broken ban's an' snecks;
An' firlot measures, corn scythes,
Wi' lang or forkit sneds;
An' harrows, barrows, cairts, an' pleughs,
An' neep machines an' sleds;
An' skeps o' bees, an' sowen sieves,
An' skulls, an' tatie creels;
An' reets, an' trunks, an' taps o' trees,
An' palin' bars an' deals,
An' sides, an' reefs o' sheds for peats,
Or sheds for haudin' nowt,
And hay that steed in soos or colls,
Or lay into the 'bout;
An' bere an' aits in sheaves or taits,
Weel haint the simmer through,
Ther'out in rucks or i' the barn,
Weel biggit in a mow,
And ither things that I've forgot
Amid sae gryte a steer,
Or winna inter into rhyme
For crabbit names or queer,

Gaed chasin' ane anither doon
Far, far ayont oor ken,
For we at hame were bairns a',
The aul'est barely ten.
And noo my Muse wad no' refuse
To tell you scores o' things
She notit as by-ordinar',
But she maun cour her wings ;
For sorra tak' that printer chiel,
He winna listen till 'er ;
He tells me that to print her screeds,
Wud cost a soud o' siller.
So I maun only wyle a fyou,
An' maybe no' the best,
An' leave till times o' better trade,
Or never print the rest ;
Nor need I wander far abroad,
For me 'twill be eneuch
To sing fat childish senses grasp'd,
Alang the Howe o' Feugh.

The dyster, like a drookit rat,
Escapit fae Dalsack,
Wi' naething save his harn sark
Upon his dreepin' back.
He saved his life, an' little mair,
By perfect speed o' fit,
But lost his shop an' a' his claith,
His bowies, pots, an' lit.

At Clinter Mill a mealer lay,
  The aits had come fae Knowes,
Unweigh't, unseckit i' the troch,
  As gweed's a dizzen bowes;
Plish-plash the water skelpit in,
  Across the disty fleer,
Owre-lap the troch, an' in a trice
  The mealer wis caul' steer.

At Ennochie a cluckin' hen
  Wis sittin' in a kist,
Baith it an' her were sweelt awa'
  Afore the creatur' wist;
We saw her passin' near Heugh-head
  As canty as ye like,
Afore her ark a droonit stirk,
  Ahint a droonit tyke,
An' ran anent her doon the banks
  For half-a-mile or mair,
Observin' that, at ilka jolt,
  She lookit unca scare,
As gin she said within hersel'—
  'Faur ever am I gyaun?
I never saw the like o' this
  In Birse nor yet in Stra'an.
Faur ever am I gyaun, bairns?
  Nae canny gait, I doot;
Gin I cud but get near the side,
  I think I wad flee oot.'

We left her near the Burn o' Frusk,
An' speculatit lang
Gin she were carri't to the sea
Afore her ark gaed wrang,
An' may be spairt by Davie Jones
To bring her cleckin' oot,
Gin she wad rear them like a hen
Or like a water coot?

'Twa muckle rucks o' fairnyear's aits
Wer' stanin' at Fytestane
When Fytie gaed to bed at nicht;
He raise, an' there wis nane!
Noo, Fytie wis a gethert carle,
Fa weel the loss cud bide;
But yet he lap as he were wud,
An' poo't his hair an' cry't—
'We're herrit, wife! we're herrit clean!
Faur, faur's the fusky pig?
Oor rucks o' corn are baith awa',
An' sae's the timmer brig!'
An' Fytie's Brig, the Lady's Brig,
An' mony brigs forbye,
That spate sent rumblin' doon the Feugh,
Or doon the A'an an' Dye.
A timmer brig ye wadna seen
Faure'er yer fit micht fa',
An' barely ane o' lime an' stane
That hedna lost a wa'.

At Mill o' Stra'an, the millert's man
Wis busy grinnin' aits,
Wi' a' his thochts on Mary Bell,
An' nane to spare for spates.
When 'clipper clapper' flew the mill,
As ne'er flew mill afore;
An' helter-skelter gush'd the spate
Through ilka hole an' bore.
Nae langer noo on women folks
Scared Sandy's notions ran,
There wis eneuch o' thochtfu' wark
For maister an' for man;
Nor yet for a' 'at baith cud lave,
Or dicht, or dem, or close,
Wis ever seen at Mill o' Stra'an
So big a caup o' brose.

A smatchet o' a lassie serv't
The souter at Dalbreck,
He lost a dizzen harn sarks
Through her entire neglec'.
She left them bleachin' o' the green,
Wi' ither claes a curn;
The spate cam' on upo' the nicht,
An' a' gaed doon the burn.
A wudder souter lingan ne'er
Through leather tried to rug;
He took the smatchet wi' his neive
A riesle on the lug.

'Tak' that,' quo' he, 'ye careless shard,
I'se gar ye wear my marks,
Yer trachle for a dizzen years
Wad no' renew my sarks!'
The sharger sat an' hoor an' grat
Upo' the deece the but
Until her e'en were baith as red
As collops newly cut.
'I'll tell my mither noo,' she cried,
'As sure as I 'm alive,
She 'll gar the souter smairt afore
The lawwers o' Stanehive.'

The wyever o' the Strathy's leem
Wis connacht oot-an'-oot,
His wobs o' wincy dawdlt waur
Nor ony scoorin' cloot,
His pirns an' clews, an' worset hesps,
Beclairtit i' the glaur,
Till 'twud hae taen a clever chiel
To tell ye fat they war.
A dowie man the wyever wis,
When to the shop he comes,
'Preserve's,' he cries, 'the hale concern's
Nae worth a bunch o' thrums!'

The Cairdin' Mill at Haugh o' Stra'an,
The eelie pigs an' woo',
Were ruint, smasht, or sweelt awa',
Alang wi' Cairdy's coo.

Fat wye the Cairder an' the wife,
Wi' little'ns twa or three,
Got aff wi' life, I dinna ken,
An' winna tell a lee;
For tho' I ken that mony ane
Fa han'le pen an' ink,
Wad no' regaird a lee or twa
To gar their story clink,
Yet I am nae romancin' bard,
In lees I dinna deal,
But only tell the stories learnt
In natur's simple skweel.

Fytte the Second

Shawin' the mishanters occurrin' to Johnny Joss the Cadger; Davie Durrit; aul' Willie Wilson; peer Tam M'Rory; Cammie; my Sister's Lam'; an' aul' Meg Mill.

A cadger body, Johnny Joss,
Nae far fae Bogendreep,
Lost shawltie, cairtie, creels an' a'
At ae unlucky sweep.
The shawlt wis droonit at the sta',
The cairt washt fae the shed,
An' Johnny made a nar' escape
Fae droonin' in his bed;
But aifter a' the splore wis owre,
The body, far fae blate,

Contrived to turn to gweed accoont
The losses by the spate.
He got a beggin' paper drawn
By some buik-learnt chiel,
An' beggit Banchory, Birse, an' Stra'an
An' bits o' Dores as weel;
An' took a soud o' siller up,
An' when his pouch wis foo,
Crap slyly o'er the Cairn o' Month
Wi' very sma' ado,
An' took a tackie i' the Mearns,
An' got a braw gudewife,
An' lived a much respectit man
The remnant o' his life.
He wadna win in twenty years
By sellin' stinkin' skate
The half o' fat he got in lieu
O' losses by the spate.

Fae Caulmeer Davie Durrit ran
The skeely wife to ca',
But ere he got to Bowsie's Haughs,
The water cover't a'.
He got a horse at Templeton,
An' boldly ventured o'er;
He cross't the brig, he pass'd the kirk,
He lan't at Lerachmore;
The skeely wife lap fae her bed,
An' buskit in a glint.

Douce Davie took his seat afore,
The skeely wife ahint,
An' Davie got her doon the brae,
Wi' neither jolt nor jirk,
An' cantily they pass'd the manse
An' cantily the kirk;
But when they turn't the merchant's shop,
For a' his canty cawin',
'I wadna gyang across,' cried she,
'For a' the wives o' Stra'an!
Preserve's! the water's ower the brig,
An' oot at baith the en's;
Turn back the beast, else I'll loup doon,
Though I sud brak my banes!'
The ne'er a word douce Davie spak',
But gae his beast a lick,
An' doon the road, an' owre the brig,
He plash'd through thin an' thick.
The skeely wife she pray't an' bann't,
An' grat for fear an' spite;
But ne'er a word douce Davie spak',
For a' that she could flyte.
Wi' stick an' heel, owre stream an' peel,
He rade wi' micht an' main,
But to his pairtner's angry words
He answerin' word gae nane,
Till baith were safe afore his door,
Then lichtly he lap doon,
'Get aff the beast, gyang in,' cries he,
'An' try an' gie 's a loon.

Gyang in at ance, an' ben the hoose,
It 's eeseless noo to fryne;
Sae tak' a dram an' dae yer wark,
For I 'm seer I 've deen mine.'
Afore an hoor a loon was born,
I min' the little'n weel,
A gyangrel at his mither's fit,
When we were at the skweel.
An' aye the howdie eest to brag,
Through a' her aifter life,
Hoo bravely she rade through the spate
To Davie Durrit's wife.

Aul' Willie Wilson lost his coo,
An' never got anither,
He left her near the waterside
A' nicht upo' the tether.
She brak' the tether in a fleg,
An' clam upon a heugh,
But mist a fit, or took a dwam,
An' tum'lt i' the Feugh,
She sank into the muckle pot,
Aneth the kelpie's stane,
An' afterwards wis swirl't awa'—
He lost her skin an' bane.

Peer Tam M'Rory's breedin' soo,
Gaed doon the Burn o' Cammie,
A muckle loss, an' sair hairt-brak'
Baith to the wife an' Tammie,

For they were just expectin' pigs,
An' pigs were gey an' dear,
The litter wad 'a paid the rent,
An' left a note, or near.

O' Cammie's hay gaed doon the Feugh,
As gweed's a dizzen stanes,
But for the loss richt weel I wat
He made a braw amen's.
I maunna say the carlie wrang,
He's lost the vital spank,
But troth for weeks he gather't hay
Fae Cammie to Deebank.
For ilka stane o' hay he lost
'Twas said he gather't ten,
An' aifter a' wis deen declair't
He hadna half his ain.
He gethert *up* as well as *doon*,
An' maybe wisna wrang,
For fa cud tell in sic a spate
Fat gait their gear micht gang?

My sister lost the brocket lam'
She got fae Tammie Durrit—
'Twis said she micht 'a got a croon
O' gweed fyte siller for it.
Peer silly ted, it brak' its string
An' ran upo' the brae,
An' saw a sheep come bleatin' doon
Upon a coll o' hay.

We didna ken—it micht 'a thocht
The bleatin' sheep its mither,
At onyrate it jumpit in,
An' baith were droon't thegither.

But wae's my hairt for aul' Meg Mill,
Far kent as 'Birlin' Meg,'
Fae Persie to the mou' o' Feugh
Nane got a gryter fleg.
Her liefu' lane in her wee hoose
She span the thread like Fate,
Till splash against her ain kailyard
She heard the muckle spate.
'Preserve's! and guide's! fat's this?' cried Meg,
'The kelpie seer eneuch!
He 's never met wi' sic a spate
Sin' ever Feugh wis Feugh;
It 's clean owregaen him in his pot,
An' fairly forced to flee,
He 's come to howff in my kailyard,
Or scrammle up a tree.
An' glaid am I the coord'y klype
Has got's deserts for ance,
To punish him for fleggin' bairns,
An' folks fa live them lanes.
But, safe me! I maun haud my tongue,
For gin the klype come ben,
He 'll harl me awa' at ance
To Satan's fiery den.'

An' here sic fears assail'd her min',
O' kelpie, spate, and deil,
That fae her fingers drapt the thread,
An' ceased the birlin' wheel;
Her hairt lap fairly till her mou',
An' thumpit like a drum;
She heard anither splash, and thocht
Her hinner en' had come;
She luiket but, she luiket ben,
To window and to door,
An' aye she heard the ither splash,
An' aye the ither roar.
She luik't to window and to door,
But dared na ventur' oot;
She scrammlt to the rantle-tree,
An' warstlt i' the soot.
Wi' a' her micht an' main she tried
To lift the timmer lum,
In hopes o' creepin' through the hole,
But oot it wadna come.
She cudna warstle through the lum,
Nor through the divot reef;
O' a' the ills that e'er cam' doon,
That nicht's were seer the chief.
She reestit o' the rantle-tree
Till it wis braid daylicht;
Then doon, an' startit for the hills,
Ye ne'er saw sic a sicht.
'Noo, faur ye gyaun?' quo' Cammie's herd;
Quo' Meg, 'To Clochnaben;

Rin, laddie, rin, an' leave yer beasts,
The wordle's at an en'!
The days hev come fan Scriptur' says
The fouks in toons fa be,
Sall leave their hames an' wor'dly gear,
An' to the mountains flee.
Rin, laddie, rin, an' dinna stan'
An' stare as ye were wud,
For Gweed forgie's, the sins o' men
Hev brocht a second flood.
Rin, laddie, rin to Clochnaben,
There's nae a glint to spare,
The angels micht rax doon for us
Gin we cud but get there.'

Fytte the Third

Shawin' the mishanters occurrin' to Johnny o' Blackness; to Davit o' the Toll o' Feugh; and to Watch o' Gellan; alang wi' a fyou concludin' remarks by the author.

The lowe o' love hed fired the hairt
O' Johnny o' Blackness;
The tryst wis set, an' he maun gang
To coort Achattie's Jess.
The flame that brent within his briest—
His first for maiden fair—
As fiercely as a rozet log
On winter hearth did flare.

Nae water's wecht cud droon it oot
Till it hed droont himsel',
An' he wad mak' his wye to Jess
Though rain in buckets fell.
His muckle coat wis nearly new,
His beets were close an' thick,
He hed an airm wi' nerves like thairm
A trusty aiken stick;
Wis he to disappoint his Jess
For show'rs o' simmer rain?
Ae kiss fae her were high reward
For nichts o' toil an' pain.
An' hoor intil Achattie's neuk
Wi' Jess upon his knee,
That very nicht his rich reward,
His taste o' bliss sud be.
Sic thochts as these, sic high resolves,
In Johnny's min' prevail,
As he in Blackie's kitchen sits,
An' sups his brose an' kail.
But when he buckles for the road,
An' comes to cross 'The Burn,'
It tak's him mair than oxter deep,
An' he is fain to turn.
'I daurna gang anither fit,
'Twere death an' naething less,
I winna risk to droon mysel'
Nae ev'n for sake o' Jess!'
So Johnny he crap hame agen,
In spite o' love's desire,

An' hang his dreeping duds to dry
Aroon' the chaumer fire.
But sorra tak' the orra man!
He spread it far an' near,
That Johnny hed set out to court,
But turn't agen for fear.
He didna lat ae word escape
Aboot the awfu' nicht,
But made it seem that Johnny turn't
For pure an' simple fricht.
The story spread, the story grew,
It cam' to Jess's ears,
That Johnny cudna come to court
Because o' ghostly fears.
So slander't Johnny got the seck;
An' so it cam' to pass,
The millert o' Tillwhillie woo'd
An' mairret Johnny's lass.
My cousin Joseph made a sang
To saften Johnny's care,
An' I 'll insert a copy here,
For copies noo are rare.

Sang—'Dowie Johnny'

'The laverock 's liltin' i' the lift,
The mavis i' the tree,
An' gatherin' gear wi' eident thrift,
I hear the honey bee.

'Fae hill an' dale an' leafy wood
Delightfu' ditties ring;
Auld Nature, in her blithest mood,
Rejoicin' i' the spring.

'But foo do I, alang the Feugh,
Sae sadly, lanely stray,
An' think o' loupin' owre a heugh,
Like honest Duncan Gray?

'Like honest Duncan I 've been cross't,
An' cross't in love fu' sair!
For me my Jessie's hairt is lost,
An' lost for evermair!

'The disty millert he 's the loon
That's stown my gem awa';
O' a' the ills that e'er cam' doon
Nae harder ill cud fa'!

'My early love, my only ane,
That I believed sae true!
O' gin I were a bairn again
I think I wad boo-hoo!

'I weel cud greet, I weel cud ban,
But that sall never be;
Whate'er his ills, a manly man
Wi' dauntless hairt will dree.

'I 'll wuss the millert luck o' Jess,
An' whistle care awa';
The back o' ane may noo distress,
But prove the face o' twa.'

The tollman at the Brig o' Feugh,
He like't the drappie weel,
The nicht afore the spate he drank
Till he fell owre the steel.
For souter Spriggs and tailor Twist
Hed ca'd to 'weet their mou','
An' they an' Davit teem't the stoup
Till a' the three were fou;
An' Davit, when his cronies left,
Aneth the table sank,
But for his nose ye micht 'a' thocht
He 'd lost the vital spank,
His wife's attempts to wauken him
Owercam' her skill and mettle,
So wi' an unco fecht she row't
An' trail't him to the settle.
An' then her tartan plaid she threw
Abeen the snorin' sot,
An' wi' a grunt or twa aboot
'The hardness o' her lot,'
She fill't the eelie lamp wi' oil,
Pat in a rashen wick,
Made doors an' windows but an' ben
As fest as they cud steek,
Pat i' the fire a risten-clod,
Drew up the asse atap,
Then slowly up the stairs to bed
Wi' weary steps she crap.
She gaed to bed, but nae to sleep,
For aye the rain cam' doon,

An' aye the Feugh gaed rairin past
Wi' lood an' looder soun',
Abeen the brig, abeen the brae,
Up to the window sole
The water raise, an' filter't in
At ilka cranny hole.
The water roun' the settle plashed
An hoor ere brak o' day;
The tollman wauken't up an' bawl't—
'Fair play! my boys, fair play!
I winna drink anither drap!
My head is like to rive,
An' gin ye jilp it doon my throat,
Then you an' I 'll strive.
An' mair nor that, ye 've droon't the drink;
The fushion o't is oot,
It 's caul', it 's weak, it 's waur, I say,
Nor water fae the spoot.'
Aul' Eppie here cam' doon the stair
Else Davit had been droon't,
An' whan she saw the state o' things,
In fac' she nearly swoon't.
'O Davit, we 're in sic a spate
As never yet cam' doon!
Come up the stair, ye senseless gowk,
Unless ye want to droon.
Ye drunken, doitet ne'er-do-weel,
Come up the stair at ance!
Ere I come at ye wi' a rung
An' brak yer lazy banes!

Fat ever keeps ye ficherin' there?
Ye 're either fey or daft;
Gin there be safety i' the hoose
It 's i' the eemest laft.
That I wis left to mairry you—
O weary fa' the day!
But yet I dinna want ye droon't—
Ye 're a' the man I hae!'
An' there, owermaister't by her grief,
A tear ran doon her nose;
She micht 'a' ventur't to the deece,
But Davit, pechin', rose,
An' stoitet forret, sair perplex't,
Through water three feet deep,
Scarce kennin' gin he wis awauk
Or dreamin' fast asleep,
Till Eppie got him by the tap
An' pu't him up the stair.
Quo' Davit then, 'I 'm wauken't, wife,
Lat go my puckle hair!
I 'm wauken't, wife! lat go my hair!
Ye 're lowsin't at the reet!'
Quo' Eppie than, 'Come up the stair,
Ye gweed-for-naething breet!'
Nor farther sall the Muse relate
Fat passed atween the pair,
But neepers always blamed the spate
For thinnin' Davit's hair.

Peer breet, the dog o' Gellan gaed
Wi' Tam to Brig o' Feugh,
He spies a stick come soomin' doon,
Ae word fae Tam's aneuch,
An' in springs Watch to fetch the stick,
An' tulzies lang an' sair,
But in a swirl he sinks at last,
We saw him never mair.
A dowie, dowie loss to me,
An' to my brither Joe,
I do believe 'twis full a raith
Ere we owercam' the blow,
For aye when we to Gellan gaed
Peer Watch wis at the door,
An' waggit 's tail and lickit 's chafts,
An' gambols made galore,
As gin he wud 'a' said, 'Step in,
I 'll follow gin ye please,
An' eat the mealocks ye lat fa'
Fan ye get bread an' cheese;
For bread and cheese ye 're sure to get,
A drink o' milk as weel,
An' mealocks ye 'll lat fa' for me,
Else I hae tent my skeel.
Step ben the hoose; yer auntie's in,
An' sae 's yer cousin Bell;
They 're i' the kitchen trockin' baith,
I saw them there mysel'.
Step in, my bairns, an' get a piece;
At Gellan we hae raff.

Tak' doon the the aul'est kebbock, Bell,
An' cut them knievlocks aff.'
Nae wunner then though Joe an I
Owre Watch made muckle main,
An' mis't him sair at Gellan's door
When we gaed back again.

But still the spate made some amen's,—
We captured troots an' eels,
An' noo an' than a protty grilse
For weeks amo' the peels.
Fae brak' o' day till fa' o' nicht
Alang the haughs we ran,
An' skilpit barefit i' the peels,—
O sirs, but it wis gran'!
Ye sud' 'a' seen us wade an' plash,
An' heard oor shouts ring oot
When we espy't a siller grilse,
Or muckle yallow troot.
O sirs, it gars me haud my head,
To think upo' the time;
It chokes my voice, it blin's my een,
It drives me aff my rhyme.
An' sae sic samples maun suffice,
For mair ye mauna luik,
Since ane fa scarce can sing a sang,
Wud ill mak' up a buik.
'Sic samples,' faith, I fear my Muse
Has run at railway speed,

An' fyou her 'samples' may peruse,
  An' fyouer buy her screed.
An' sae I 'll en' as I began—
  In Scotlan's boun's sin' syne,
We hinna hed anither spate
  Like auchteen twenty-nine.

GLOSSARY

Abeen—above.
Aits—oats.
Anent—in front of.
Asse—ashes.
Aughteen—eighteen.
Aumries—cupboards.
Awauk—awake.
Ayont—beyond.

Backets—wooden receptacles for holding ashes or for salt.
Bairn—child.
Ban—to curse, to swear.
Ban's—bands.
Beclairtet—besmeared, bedaubed.
Beets—boots.
Bide—to stay, to bear, to suffer.
Birlin—whistling, revolving.
Blate—a dullard, shy, bashful.
Bout, into the—as it fell when cut.
Bowies—barrels.
Braw—handsome, fine, pretty, grand.
Brent—burnt.
Breet—brute.
Brocket—having a black and white marked face, spotted.
Brose—oatmeal mixed with boiling water or milk.
Buiks—books.
Buskit—dressed.
But an' ben—the two ends of a house, *i.e.*, the kitchen and the sitting-room.
By-ordinar—extraordinary, out the common.
Byous—beyond ordinary.

Cadger—an itinerant merchant.
Canasses—canvas sheets for catching the grain at winnowing time.
Canty—cheerful, merry, brisk, lively.
Cantily—pleasantly, merrily.
Carle—a peasant, an old man.
Caul-steer—meal and cold water.
Caups—wooden bowls.
Cawin'—driving.
Chafts—chops, jaws.
Chaumer—chamber, bedroom.
Cheeks o' doors—door-posts.
Chessils—cheese-presses.
Chiel—a fellow, a man.
Clam—climbed, clambered.
Cleckin'—brood of chickens.
Clews—balls of worsted.
Cloot, scoorin'—a bit old cloth for washing floors.
Clink—rhyme, jingle.
Cogs—pails made with staves.
Colls—hay-ricks.
Collops—slices of raw meat.
Connacht—destroyed, spoiled.
Coord'y—cowardly.
Couple-bauks—the cross beams of a roof on which rafters are laid.
Cour—droop, stoop through fear.
Crack o'doom—day of judgment.
Creels—fish-baskets.
Cruiks—chains and hooks for suspending pots over a fire.
Crap—crept.
Cud—could.
Curn—a quantity.
Cutty-steels—low stools.

Dawdlt—bedahbled, knocked about, spoiled.
Deece—an old-fashioned wooden settle.
Deil—the evil one.
Dem—dam.
Dicht—clean, wipe.
Divot—a thin flat oblong turf used for covering cottages.
Doitet—foolish, silly, slow to apprehend.
Douce—steady, quiet, plodding, respectable.
Dowie—sad, sorrowful, ailing.
Drappie—intoxicants.
Drookit—drenched, half-drowned.
Duds—clothes.
Dwam—a swoon.
Dyster—a dyer.

Eelie-pigs—oil jars.
Eemest—uppermost.
Eest—used.
Eeseless—useless.
Eident—continuous, steady.
Eneuch—enough, sufficient.

Fae—from.
Fairnyear—preceding year.
Fat—what.
Faur—where.
Fest—fast.
Fey—doomed, mad, frenzied.
Ficherin'—trifling, delaying, fumbling.
Fiersday—Thursday.
Fit—foot.
Fleers—floors.
Fleg—fright.
Flyte—scold.
Forbye—besides.
Forret—forward.
Fou—intoxicated.
Fryne—to fret through ill-humour.
Fushion—strength.
Fusky-pig—jar for holding whisky.
Fyou—few.
Fyte—white.
Fytte or fit—section of a poem.

Gait—road, direction.
Galore—in abundance.
Gar—compel.
Gethert—wealthy, well-to-do.
Gey an' dear—high-priced.
Gin—if.
Girnels—meal-chests.
Glaur—soft liquid mud.
Glint—a gleam, an instant of time.
Gowk—a blockhead.
Grat—wept.
Grinnin'—grinding.
Gryte—great.
Gweed—good.
Gyangrel—a child just beginning to walk.
Gyaun—going.

Haint—economised, preserved.
Harn-sark—coarse linen or hempen shirt.
Haughs—flat lands by a river.
Harl—pull roughly.
Herrit—despoiled, ruined.
Hesp—a hank of yarn.
Heugh—a steep bank.
Hieds—heads.
Hinner-en'—last hour, death.
Hoor—hour.
Howdie—midwife.
Howes—hollows.
Howff—to take shelter, a shelter.

Ilka—each, every.
Inter—enter.

Jilp—to dash water on one.

Kebbock—whole cheese.
Kegs—small casks.
Kelpie—water spirit.
Kennin'—knowing.
Kirns—churns.
Knievlocks—lumps, a good-sized bit.
Kist—chest, box.
Klype—a term of contempt, a tell-tale.

Laft—a loft.
Lap—leapt.
Lave—to bale water.
Laverock—lark.
Lawwers—lawyers.
Legs—frames for stretching stockings.
Leem—loom.
Lick—a stroke with a whip or stick.
Liefu' lane—quite alone.
Lift—sky, heavens.
Lilt—to sing merrily.
Lingan—shoemaker's thread.
Lit—dye.
Little'ns—children.
Loup—to spring, to leap.
Loon—a boy.
Lowe—light.
Lowsin't—loosening.
Lug—ear.
Lum—chimney.

Main—moan, lament.
Maun—must.
Mealer—quantity of meal ground at a time.
Mealocks—small fragments of oatcakes.
Mishanters—misfortunes.
Mow—a small rick.
Muckle—large, great.

Neep—turnip.
Neive—fist, hand.
Neuk—corner by the fire.
Note—a pound-note.
Nowt—cattle.

Orra man—a man employed upon a farm to do odds and ends.
Oxter—armpit.
Owergaun—exhausted, overcome.

Pechin'—panting, breathing with difficulty.
Pirn—bobbin of a shuttle.
Poo't—pulled.
Pot—a deep pool in a river.
Pretty—fine, excellent.
Puckle—an indefinite quantity.

Raff—plenty, abundance.
Rairin'—roaring.
Raise—rose.
Raith—quarter of a year.
Rantle-trees—iron bars in chimney on which the crooks for pots are hung.
Rashen—made of rushes.
Rax—reach, reach out for.
Reamin'—overflowing, foaming.
Reefs—roofs.
Reets—roots.
Reestit—to be suddenly stopped in progress, to perch like a bird at night.
Rive—to split.
Riesle—a resounding blow.
Risten-clod—a sod to keep in the fire over-night.
Row't—rolled.
Rozet log—resinous log.
Ruck—rick or stack.
Rug—to pull, to tug.
Rung—cudgel, staff or stick.

Seer—sure.
Seck, got the—discharged.

Screeds—writings.
Secks—sacks.
Settle—a long seat in kitchen.
Shard—a term of contempt for a little despicable person.
Sharger—a thin stunted person.
Shawltie—a pony, small horse.
Siller—silver, money.
Skeely-wife—midwife.
Skeil—skill.
Skeps—straw beehives.
Skilpit—waded.
Skriek o' day—cock-crow, day-break.
Skulls—shallow wicker-baskets.
Skweel—school.
Sleds—low frameworks without wheels for carrying loads.
Smatchet—a little person, a small stunted person.
Snecks—latches.
Sneds—handles or shafts.
Sole—sill.
Soom—swim.
Soos—haystacks of rectangular shape.
Soud—a quantity, a deal of.
Souter—shoemaker.
Sowen sieves—sieves for sifting out the oatmeal husks from which sowens are made.
Spank (commonly "spunk")—a spark of fire—to lose the vital, to die.
Spate—flood.
Speelt—climbed, scaled.
Splore—disturbance.
Steed—stood.
Steel—stool.
Steer—confusion.
Stirk—a young bull or heifer.
Stoitet—staggered, stumbled.
Stoup—a flagon.
Swirl't awa'—carried off with a whirling motion.
Sweelt awa'—washed away.

Tackie—a croft, a small farm.
Taits—small bundles, trusses.
Tap—top.
Tatie—potato.
Ted—a term of contempt.
Teem't—emptied.
Tent—lost.
Thack—thatch.
Thairm—cord of catgut.
Ther'out—outside.
Thocht—thought.
Thestreen—last night.
Thrums—waste ends of thread.
Timmer—wooden.
Trachle—pottering work.
Trockin'—familiar intercourse, pottering.
Tulzie—a struggle.
Tyke—a dog.

Unco fecht—uncommon struggle.
Unca—very, extremely, great.
Uncanny—not kindly, unearthly, possessed of supernatural powers.
Unseckit—not put into sacks.

Warstlt—struggled, wrestled.
Weety—wet.
Win—earn, to get.
Wud—mad, angry.
Wudder—angrier.
Wyever—weaver.
Wyle—select, choose.

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